

be applicable to payments made under this part.

(c) The provisions of part 707 of this title relating to the making of payments in the event of the death of a program participant or and in the event of other special circumstances shall apply to payments made under this part.

PART 1415—GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

Sec.

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SOURCE: 69 FR 29181, May 21, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1415.1 Purpose.

(a) The purpose of the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is to assist landowners in protecting, conserving, and restoring grassland resources on private lands through short and long-term rental agreements and easements.

(b) The objectives of GRP are to:

- (1) Emphasize preservation of native and natural grasslands and shrublands, first and foremost;
- (2) Protect grasslands and shrublands from the threat of conversion;
- (3) Support grazing operations; and
- (4) Maintain and improve plant and animal biodiversity.

§ 1415.2 Administration.

(a) The regulations in this part set forth policies, procedures, and requirements for program implementation of the GRP as administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The regulations in this part will be administered under the general supervision and direction of the NRCS Chief and the FSA Administrator. These two agency leaders will:

(1) Concur in the establishment of program policy and direction; development of the State allocation formula, and development of broad national ranking criteria;

(2) Use a national allocation formula to provide GRP funds to USDA State offices that emphasizes support for biodiversity of plants and animals, grasslands under the greatest threat of conversion, and grazing operations. The allocation formula will also include a factor representing program demand. The demand factor could be expressed in terms of applications received, acres offered, funding needs for such applications, or a combination of these elements. The allocation formula may be modified periodically to change the emphasis of any factor to reflect information about natural resource concerns. The data in the allocation formula will be updated periodically as new information becomes available.

(3) Ensure the National, State and local level information regarding program implementation is made available to the public;

(4) Consult with USDA leaders at the State level and other Federal agencies with the appropriate expertise and information when evaluating program policies and direction; and

(5) Authorize NRCS State Conservationists and FSA State Executive Directors to determine how funds will be used and how the program will be implemented at the State level.

(b) At the State level, the NRCS State Conservationist and the FSA State Executive Director are jointly responsible to:

- (1) Identify State priorities for project selection, based on input from the State Technical Committee;
- (2) Identify, as appropriate, USDA employees at the field level responsible